Exports

BC STATS

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- B.C. exports inched up 0.6% year-to-date to May.
- Softwood lumber exports jumped 14.6% in the first five months of 2016.
- Energy product exports fell 20.4% year-to-date to May.

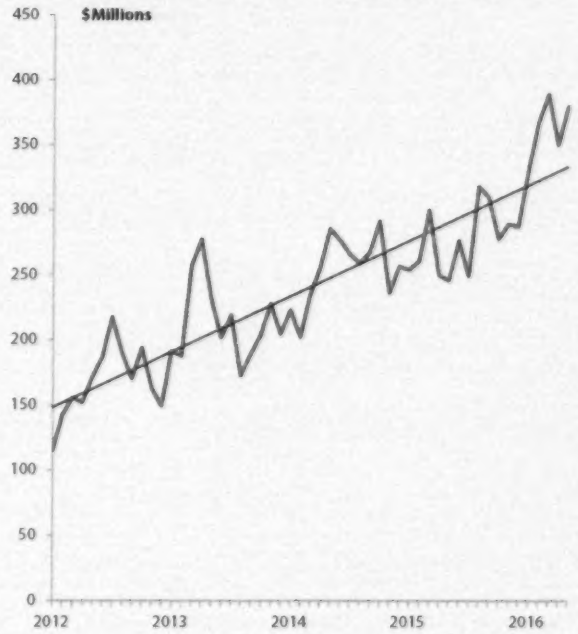
By Destination

The value of B.C.'s commodity exports edged up 0.6% year-to-date to May, compared to the same five-month period in 2015. An 8.0% jump in shipments to the United States helped offset declines to most other major destinations. There was a drop in exports to Mainland China (-2.7%), Japan (-9.2%), South Korea (-11.0%), the European Union (-8.9%), Taiwan (-26.3%), Australia (-10.6%) and Hong Kong (-11.5%), while exports to Mexico plunged 65.0%. On the other hand, shipments to India surged 34.9%.

By Commodity

B.C.'s exports of solid wood products climbed 16.3% over the first five months of 2016, compared to the same period a year earlier. Exports are being buoyed by a temporary free trade period for softwood lumber exports to the United States. The Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) with the U.S. expired back in October, but under the terms of the agreement, the U.S. cannot launch a trade action until a year after the expiry date.

B.C.'s softwood lumber exports to the U.S. have jumped significantly since the expiry of the SLA



Source: Statistics Canada / Prepared by BC Stats

Shipments of softwood lumber to the United States jumped 38.7% year-to-date to May, compared to the same period in 2015. This helped boost the value of exports of softwood lumber to all destinations up 14.6%. There was also double-digit growth in shipments of all other wood categories, with the exception of logs, which bucked the overall trend, dipping 2.4%.

Elsewhere in the forest sector, exports of pulp and paper products have not fared as well, slumping 8.6% over the first five months of 2016. Shipments of pulp fell 4.8%, while newsprint exports were almost halved (-46.7%). Other paper and paperboard product shipments dropped 14.1%, but there was growth in exports of other pulp and paper products (+17.0%).

There was a substantial 20.4% drop in the value of energy product exports year-to-date to May. The value of coal shipments fell 22.4%, with lower prices responsible for much of the decline, as volumes of coal exports fell only 5.5%. For natural gas, lower prices were responsible for the entire 11.3% drop in value, as volumes of gas shipped actually climbed 11.2%. Lower prices also affected the value of electricity exports, which slumped 22.0%, compared to an 11.7% decline in volume. There was also a 29.5% decrease in exports of other energy products.

The value of metallic mineral product shipments dipped 1.1% year-to-date to May, despite a 2.9% boost in exports of copper ores and concentrates, which comprise around two-thirds of the total value of metallic mineral product exports. There was also substantial growth in shipments of unwrought aluminum products (+81.8%), resulting from the return to full production of the Rio Tinto Alcan smelter upon completion of the smelter upgrade. Exports of unwrought lead also increased (+27.3%); however, reductions in shipments of unwrought zinc (-13.0%), molybdenum ores and concentrates (-77.6%), zinc ores and concentrates (-100.0%) and other metallic mineral products (-67.2%) drove down the overall value of metallic mineral product exports.

There was strong growth in B.C.'s exports of agriculture and food products (+7.8%) and fish (+12.4%) over the first five months of 2016. Shipments of machinery and equipment climbed 4.2%, mostly due to a 64.2% surge in exports of motor vehicles and parts. There was also a big jump in exports of plastics and articles of plastic (+19.3%); however, shipments of chemicals and chemical products dropped 4.2% and exports of fabricated metal products fell 1.7%.

Seasonally Adjusted Exports

Seasonal adjustment provides a means of making month-to-month comparisons by removing the periodic seasonal fluctuations that occur. Variations from normal seasonal patterns are revealed in the seasonally adjusted series.

The value of B.C.'s commodity exports dipped 0.5% in May as significant declines in shipments of energy products (-9.3%), metal ores and non-metallic minerals (-6.6%) and industrial machinery, equipment and parts (-8.4%) more than offset strong growth in forestry products and building and packaging materials (+4.9%). Exports to the U.S. rose 1.4%, largely due to a 3.6% increase in shipments of forestry products and building and packaging materials. Exports to the rest of the world fell 2.7%, as large decreases in shipments of energy products (-6.9%) and metal ores and non-metallic minerals (-6.9%) offset a 6.5% boost in shipments of forestry products and building and packaging materials.

Visit the exports and imports page on the BC Stats website.

Did You Know?

The expansion of the Rio Tinto Alcan aluminum smelter in Kitimat has increased its production capacity by up to 420,000 tonnes annually. In comparison, prior to the start of construction on the expansion project, B.C.'s exports of unwrought aluminum averaged around 220,000 to 230,000 tonnes per year.

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